



# SMOG CHECK ADVISORY

Official Publication of the California Department of Consumer Affairs/Bureau of Automotive Repair

July 1999

## Federal Border Smog Reduction Act Implementation Underway

**S**mog Check stations located near the California-Mexico border are likely to be seeing new customers in their shops with vehicles that must now meet the state's smog requirements.

For the last two months, U.S. Customs officials have been informing Mexican residents crossing the border about the Border Smog Reduction Act (H.R. 8), a new federal law that requires Mexican vehicles that cross the border regularly to be in compliance with California's Smog Check Program. U.S. Customs and the California Highway Patrol (CHP) began enforcement of H.R. 8 on June 27, 1999.

Brochures from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and the Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR) are being distributed to motorists with vehicles crossing from Mexico. They explain how to Smog Check and register these vehicles.

"As a result of this new law, BAR staff and licensed Smog Check stations should be prepared to assist the affected motorists," said Acting BAR Chief Patrick Dorais. "We want to make certain that those providing guidance to these consumers follow the practices outlined in this edition of the *Smog Check Advisory*."

In addition to Smog Checks, DMV is requiring these vehicles to be registered in California and will consider the transaction as an initial registration of an out-of-state vehicle. As a result, a smog certificate is required.

Here is a table of instructions to use when testing these vehicles:

If ...	Then...
Vehicle was originally manufactured for sale in the United States (i.e., California or federally/49-state certified)...	Perform a Smog Check inspection on the vehicle and treat it as an "initial registration." *
Vehicle was originally manufactured for sale in Mexico or another country (direct import, also known as "grey market")...	Do <b>not</b> perform a Smog Check inspection. Refer the consumer to one of the Air Resources Board (ARB) licensed conversion laboratories in Santa Ana (714) 545-9822 or in Napa (707) 258-1753.
Vehicle has had an engine change or is a specially constructed vehicle...	Do <b>not</b> perform a Smog Check inspection. Refer the consumer to the Referee Scheduling Center at (800) 622-7733.

- \* When inspecting California or federally certified vehicles with missing, modified, or disconnected emission control equipment, inform the consumer of the required equipment and, if applicable, offer the necessary diagnostic and repair services. Do **not** refer these vehicles to the Referee Scheduling Center.

See **Border** continued on page 6.

## Fuel Cap Testing Begins in Basic Areas

### New Software Includes Pre-Inspection Test Mode

**O**n July 1, Basic and Change-of-Ownership Area stations began using new BAR-90 software, which contains a pre-inspection test mode and a gas cap testing prompt. As a result, stations in these areas are now required to perform pressure tests of gas caps during all Smog Check inspections and fail those vehicles with gas caps that do not pass this portion of the inspection.

In addition to fuel cap testing, Basic and Change-of-Ownership Area stations began using the new "pre-test" ("P") mode on their BAR-90 units to perform all pre-inspections on July 1. In the April edition of the *Smog Check Advisory*, technicians using the BAR-90 Test Analyzer System (TAS) were told to pretest in the training mode. Stations should now perform pre-inspections for their customers in the new pretest mode on the BAR-90. The training mode is to be used only for training purposes.

The new pretest mode on the BAR-90 allows a station to duplicate an official Smog Check inspection in all respects, but without transmittal of a certificate to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). The pretest mode also allows stations/technicians to receive credit for the repairs they perform before an official inspection, thus providing more accurate data on the effectiveness of the Smog Check Program in reducing vehicle emissions.

See **Software** continued on page 6.



# SNAPSHOT

*Below are the Smog Check inspection and repair statistics for April and May 1999. The numbers include both Acceleration Simulation Mode (ASM) and Two-Speed Idle (TSI) testing and the number of certificates issued for all tests performed. The remainder of the data is for first tests.*

	APRIL	MAY
<b><i>Program Volume</i></b>		
Tests Conducted	907,661 *	912,704 *
Vehicles Tested	752,805	762,241
Vehicles Failed	61,727	63,425
Certificates Issued	820,532	824,480
<b><i>Type of Failure</i></b>		
Tailpipe:	44,106 ( 5.9%)	45,481 ( 6.0%)
Gross Polluters	13,655 ( 1.8%) **	13,939 ( 1.8%) **
Visual	12,251 ( 1.6%)	12,552 ( 1.6%)
Functional	28,715 ( 3.8%)	29,572 ( 3.9%)
<b><i>Failure by Station Type</i></b>		
Test & Repair	22,228 ( 5.1%)	23,184 ( 5.2%)
GSGR	10,738 ( 6.5%)	10,839 ( 6.6%)
GPC	5,448 ( 8.2%)	5,500 ( 8.5%)
Test-Only	23,240 (27.3%)	23,896 (27.1%)
<b><i>Consumer Assistance/Referee Centers</i></b>		
Tests	1,644	1,394
Cost Waivers Issued	81	82
Hardship Extensions Issued	184	13
<b><i>Average Reported Repair Costs</i></b>		
Vehicles Repaired	61,601	61,895
Average Cost (statewide)	\$ 96	\$ 97
Test & Repair Stations	\$ 87	\$ 88
GSGR Stations	\$100	\$ 98
GPC Stations	\$142	\$149
Enhanced Areas	\$ 95	\$ 95
Non-Enhanced Areas	\$105	\$103

\* Includes multiple tests on same vehicle.

\*\* Subset of tailpipe failures.

## BAR Revising GPC Program Criteria to Focus on Repairs in Phase II Pilot

**T**he Bureau of Automotive Repair plans to pilot a new set of repair-based criteria for the Gross Polluter Certification (GPC) Pilot, according to Acting BAR Chief Patrick Dorais.

"We anticipate that Phase II of the GPC pilot program will begin later this year with stations given ample notice of the standards necessary to qualify," he said. "In the meantime, we will be using VID information to develop the appropriate criteria these stations will be required to meet."

Among the VID items being reviewed:

- ❖ Manual VIN entries for 1990 and newer model-year vehicles vs. manual VIN entries for 1989 and older model-year vehicles.
- ❖ Average post-repair emissions reductions.
- ❖ Number of \$450 repair cost waivers issued to vehicles repaired at the station.
- ❖ No-match rate.
- ❖ Off-line rate.
- ❖ Number of vehicles repaired by the stations.

Once BAR selects the GPC Phase II Pilot Stations, each station will be required to pass a Quality Assurance Audit and demonstrate they are using the diagnostic procedures outlined in the 20-hour update training class.

"When we have a clear picture of the type of performance we need to meet our Smog Check Program goals, we will select stations that are capable and willing to meet the new criteria for the Phase II GPC Pilot Program," Dorais added. ❖

## Clarification

**A** story in the June edition of the *Smog Check Advisory* said that once BAR-97 warranties expired, shop owners have to decide whether to purchase a service contract from the manufacturer or risk going with no coverage. However, the story failed to point out that section 4.3b of the BAR-97 specification states, "The manufacturer shall make available an annual service contract covering, as a minimum, all of the items located inside the secured area(s) of the analyzer, the dynamometer and the fuel cap tester. Each licensed Smog Check station shall be required to have a valid service/maintenance contract with the manufacturer or his/her designated representative for each BAR-97 operated, once the warranty purchased with the BAR-97 has expired. ..." ❖



### THE BOTTOM LINE



- 108** Cut score on the current smog exam.
- 74.07** Percent of technicians who passed EA Smog Check exam in May 1999.
- 7,714** Technicians who completed BAR-97 8-Hour Transition Training.
- 6,797** Technicians who completed the BAR-97 20-Hour Update Training (of approximately 8,600 EA technicians who will need it by June 30, 2000).
- 8,690** Advanced (EA) technicians licensed as of June 9, 1999.
- 4,423** Basic (EB) Area technicians licensed as of June 9, 1999.
- 4,872** Test & Repair Stations statewide as of June 1, 1999.
- 1,896** Gold Shield Guaranteed Repair Stations (GSGR) statewide as of June 1, 1999.
- 301** Test-Only stations statewide as of June 1, 1999.
- 419** Test-Only lanes statewide as of June 1, 1999.





## SMOG CHECK STATION CITATIONS

	FACILITY NAME	ADDRESS	CITY	ZIP	LEVEL	ARD NUMBER	CITATION NUMBER	ASSES AMOUNT	ASSES DATE	DATE MAILED
	Huntington Beach Service	17502 Goldenwest	Huntington Beach	92647	1	AK180767	C98-0439	250	05/18/99	04/28/98
**	Seal Beach Arco Smog Pros	490 Pacific Coast Hwy	Seal Beach	90740	2	AK196616	C99-0321	750	05/05/99	03/11/99
	All Pro Auto Care	1739 Palm Avenue	San Diego	92154	1	AB198148	C99-0327	250	05/10/99	03/11/99
	Clairemont Texaco	4504 Clairemont Mesa	San Diego	92117	1	AG161757	C99-0329	250	05/04/99	03/11/99
*	Leisure World Unocal	24082 El Toro Road	Laguna Hills	92653	2	AL163862	C99-0342	750	05/10/99	03/15/99
*	South Main Automotive	2515 South Main Street	Santa Ana	92707	2	AA170454	C99-0344	750	05/17/99	03/19/99
	Toyota of Garden Grove	9444 TRASK Avenue	Garden Grove	92644	2	AL135951	C99-0346	750	05/05/99	04/01/99
	Top Tune #2	1502 South El Camino Real	San Clemente	92672	2	AD199169	C99-0348	750	05/28/99	04/01/99
	Smogies Smog Shop	4533 Telephone Road	Ventura	93003	1	AG154538	C99-0350	250	05/06/99	04/01/99
	Barton's Smog	4867 Olivehurst Avenue	Olivehurst	95961	1	AL191898	C99-0366	250	05/05/99	04/01/99
	Lee's Automotive Service	4001 East 7TH Street	Long Beach	90804	1	AM121952	C99-0368	250	05/04/99	04/08/99
*	Lis Gas Station	124 West Pacific Coast Hwy	Long Beach	90806	2	AC165453	C99-0370	750	05/28/99	04/12/99
*	Tony & Terra Shell	3009 Long Beach Blvd.	Long Beach	90807	1	AE178631	C99-0372	250	05/07/99	04/12/99
*	James Auto Service	11804 East Carson Street	Hawaiian G	90716	1	AB158668	C99-0376	250	05/26/99	04/12/99
**	Valley Lube Center	12 South Livermore Avenue	Livermore	94550	1	AL175408	C99-0382	250	05/11/99	04/08/99
	Marina Union 76 & Test Only	4801 Lincoln Blvd.	Marina Del Rey	90292	1	AB198358	C99-0384	250	05/10/99	04/08/99
	Western Auto Inspection	3534 South Western Avenue	Los Angeles	90018	1	AJ142037	C99-0386	250	05/24/99	04/08/99
	Auto Chek Centers Inc	8971 Kramerwood Place	Los Angeles	90034	1	AE125138	C99-0388	250	05/07/99	04/08/99
	Cook's Corner	5925 Melrose Avenue	Los Angeles	90038	1	AG195543	C99-0390	250	05/10/99	04/08/99
	K T Auto & Tire	1163 South La Brea Avenue	Los Angeles	90019	1	AF178981	C99-0396	250	05/07/99	04/08/99
	Arcadia Test Only Center	401 North First Avenue	Arcadia	91006	1	AE199863	C99-0400	1,000	05/07/99	04/19/99
	Culver City Unocal	10638 Culver Blvd.	Culver City	90232	1	AM197381	C99-0405	250	05/17/99	04/21/99
	Discount Auto	9571 East Artesia Blvd.	Bellflower	90706	1	AB176978	C99-0407	250	05/21/99	04/21/99
	Quality Smog & Auto Repair	9519 East Artesia Blvd.	Bellflower	90706	2	AF160987	C99-0409	750	05/18/99	04/21/99
	D & D Auto Repair & Service	15015 Leffingwell Road	Whittier	90604	1	AK185986	C99-0413	250	05/13/99	04/21/99
	Fred's Peppertree Tune Up	11679 East Firestone Blvd.	Norwalk	90650	1	AH112065	C99-0415	250	05/06/99	04/21/99
	Eclipse Engineering	12353 East Whittier Blvd	Whittier	90602	1	AL114158	C99-0419	250	05/13/99	04/21/99
	Fahmi Texaco	14155 Imperial Hwy	La Mirada	90638	1	AD116998	C99-0421	250	05/17/99	04/21/99
*	All Auto Smog & Tune Up	9200 Greenback Lane	Orangevale	95662	1	AD183126	C99-0427	250	05/19/99	04/06/99
**	OK Tire Stores Inc	4715 Auburn Blvd.	Sacramento	95841	1	AD017087	C99-0429	250	05/21/99	04/26/99
	Avalon Smog Center	4368 South Avalon Blvd.	Los Angeles	90011	1	AC198414	C99-0435	250	05/14/99	04/27/99
*	Pro Lube & Tune Shop Smog	16319 Foothill Blvd.	Fontana	92335	2	AK163358	C99-0438	750	05/27/99	04/27/99
	Only Smog Check	11869 Beach Blvd. #E	Stanton	90680	1	AF200368	C99-0447	250	05/24/99	04/28/99
	Suburban Ford	4625 Madison Avenue	Sacramento	95841	1	AA001874	C99-0483	750	05/21/99	05/18/99

\* Stations that have had their Gold Shield Guaranteed Repair (GSGR) certification withdrawn.

\*\* Stations that have had their GSGR certification and Gross Polluter Certification (GPC) Pilot authority withdrawn.

\*\*\* Stations that have had their GSGR certification, GPC, and LIRAP authority withdrawn.

## Stations in Basic Areas Urged to Help Motorists Properly

Calls and letters coming to BAR's Consumer Information Center (CIC) indicate that shops in Basic Areas are sometimes making incorrect referrals to Test-Only stations.

"These inappropriate referrals compound the 'ping-pong' rate and can hurt the station's reputation," said BAR's Acting Chief Patrick Dorais.

Technicians are urged to check the motorist's registration renewal notice to determine if a referral to a Test-Only station is required and to follow the prompts provided by the Test Analyzer System (TAS), which will indicate if a loaded-mode test on a dynamometer is required. Remember, some Basic Area stations have BAR-97 analyzers and can perform these loaded-mode tests.

If referral to a Test-Only station or a station in an Enhanced Area is required, provide good customer service by helping motorists find the stations that perform these services. Here are some resources to help consumers locate the appropriate station:

- ❖ Refer motorists to our Consumer Hotline at (800) 952-5210, where a customer service representative will help them find an appropriate station.
- ❖ Consult the BAR website at [www.smogcheck.ca.gov](http://www.smogcheck.ca.gov) for a list of stations.
- ❖ Call your local BAR field office.

"By following these simple procedures, shop employees and technicians can provide a valuable service to their customers and maintain their good reputation," Dorais added. ❖

## More Stations Lose Gold Shield and Gross Polluter Certification Status

Follow-up undercover audits have resulted in the decertification of 90 Gold Shield Guaranteed Repair (GSGR) stations as of June 10, 1999.

Of these stations, 33 were also Gross Polluter Certification (GPC) stations, and 12 of those were also Low-Income Repair Assistance Program (LIRAP) stations. As a result of the violations, the State has rescinded its contract with these GPC and LIRAP stations.

"All of these stations performed incorrect inspections during the second phase of our audits last year and were audited again this year," said BAR's Smog Check Enforcement Manager Mike Vanderlaan. "As a result of the follow-up audits, they were issued citations and are now decertified."

All 90 of the stations are now test and repair stations only. The stations can no longer advertise themselves as Gold Shield stations, the GPC stations cannot

certify Gross Polluters, and the stations that also had LIRAP contracts with the state can no longer offer their customers state-subsidized repair assistance.

All 90 of the stations in violation during the follow-up audits received citations and fines. As part of the citation process, BAR investigators held conferences with each of the station owners to explain the nature and pattern of the violations found in their shops. Nearly all of these violations relate to a failure to perform part of the required visual or functional tests. For example, many stations failed to perform the ignition timing check.

"These stations were taking shortcuts in their inspections and not taking the time to do complete tests," he said. "We gave them the opportunity to correct what they were doing wrong during last year's audits and now we're taking enforcement action." Under the enforcement process, stations face license revocation if they receive three citations. ❖

## Test-Only Station Cited for Performing Repairs

The owner of a Southern California Test-Only Station was recently cited and fined \$1,000 for performing repairs on a customer's High Emitter Profile (HEP) vehicle, which is prohibited in Test-Only station regulations.

The Test-Only station owner/technician diagnosed the vehicle, replaced the oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>) sensor, and sublet the vehicle to a local muffler shop for a new catalytic converter. Then the owner/technician retested the vehicle and certified it.

"Test-Only Stations are an important component of the Smog Check Program," said Acting BAR Chief Patrick Dorais. "They were established to conduct impartial tests and are specifically prohibited from being involved in repairing vehicles."

Penalties from violations of Test-Only regulations can range from citations and fines to license revocation. The owner/

technician in Southern California was issued a citation and fined after he cooperated with BAR investigators, who found no evidence of other repairs being conducted at the facility.

To avoid Test-Only regulation violations, owners and technicians must observe the following:

- ❖ Do not conduct repairs on customers' failing vehicles.
- ❖ Do not sublet repairs.
- ❖ Give customers a list, provided by BAR, of the **licensed** Smog Check Repair Stations in the area, but do not refer customers to any specific repair facility.
- ❖ Do not accept sublet smogs from other Smog Check Stations.

For more information about Test-Only station requirements, contact Rocky Carlisle in BAR's Smog Check Operations Division at (916) 255-4360. ❖



## Software *continued from page 1.*

Technicians may choose the pretest mode when the BAR-90 unit prompts them to enter the test type. With the new software, the choices are initial test, after repairs test, or pretest. BAR-97 units already have a specific pretest ("Q") mode.

With the fuel cap testing program officially beginning on July 1, Basic and Change-of-Ownership Area stations that did not have the new BAR-90 software installed were scheduled to be locked out of BAR's Electronic Transmission (ET) system. As a result, they will be unable to perform Smog Check inspections until the new software is purchased and installed.

"BAR-90 manufacturers guaranteed station owners who purchased the new software by April 15 that they would be ready for business on July 1," said Acting Smog Check Chief of Staff Chris Edwards. "Station owners who purchased by April 15, but whose software has not been installed and are locked out, are urged to contact their manufacturers to have them install the software immediately."

Unfortunately, station owners who did not purchase by April 15 are suffering the consequences of being locked out until they purchase and install the software. Once the new software is installed, the station manager should call the local BAR field office to have the lockout removed. Gas cap testing in Basic and Change-of-Ownership Areas had originally been scheduled to begin on December 15, 1998, but was delayed until July 1 because manufacturers could not meet the original deadline.

According to scientific tests, fuel evaporative emissions are responsible for nearly 30 percent of all automobile emissions. Evaporative emissions

contain hydrocarbons and volatile organic compounds, which contribute greatly to air pollution.

"Since the gas cap is one of the few moving parts in the evaporative emissions control system, it is the part most likely to fail," said Edwards. "That's why gas cap testing and replacement is a highly effective pollution reduction method."

The new BAR-90 software incorporates a prompt for the gas cap test as a part of the functional test. Depending on the specific manufacturer of the software package, the prompt occurs at or near the very end of the test sequence. Unlike the newer BAR-97 machines, the gas cap tester does not plug into the BAR-90 units, according to BAR software engineer Lew Luther.

"Technicians employ the cap tester as a stand-alone device and then enter the appropriate results in the BAR-90 unit when prompted by the software," he said.

There are still some gas caps for which there is no adapter. The most common are the 1978-1991 Hondas and 1986-1993 Acuras with the "cam-on" style cap.

As a result, the following vehicles are exempt from gas cap testing until a new cap adapter is available:

- ❖ All 1978-1989 Hondas.
- ❖ 1990-1991 Honda Civic, CRX, and Prelude.
- ❖ 1986-1993 Acura Integra, and Legend.
- ❖ All 1987-1989 Sterling models.
- ❖ 1983-1996 Nissan 300 ZX.

Until manufacturers develop an adapter for these vehicles, technicians are authorized by BAR to bypass the gas cap test by selecting "N/A" only for those vehicles listed below.

## Border *continued from page 1.*

If vehicles fail a Smog Check upon initial registration in California, they must be repaired. These out-of-state vehicles are not eligible to participate in any of the state's financial assistance programs, including repair cost waivers, economic hardship extensions, low-income repair assistance, or vehicle retirement. Therefore, it is important that Smog Check stations clearly and accurately communicate to these motorists what repairs are necessary. In some cases, repair costs may come close to the value of the vehicle, and the owner may wish to return the vehicle to Mexico rather than repair it.

For more information on registration requirements, consumers should call DMV's Telephone Service Center at (619) 688-0227 or will be sent to one of these DMV field offices:

Chula Vista: (619) 427-5550  
 El Centro: (760) 352-1684  
 San Diego: (619) 688-0227  
 San Ysidro: (619) 428-4433

"We are including these directions in the next edition of the *Smog Check Inspection Manual*," Dorais added. "If Smog Check stations have either technical or general questions, they can contact field office staff at the numbers provided."

General consumer questions about Smog Check program requirements for these vehicles may be directed to BAR's toll-free Consumer Information Center at (800) 952-5210. ❖

In addition, there may be other fuel caps without adapters that have not yet been identified but which should be considered for exemption. Technicians who identify additional fuel caps that are untestable, but not on the list provided above, may call Jon Gee in BAR's Engineering Division at (916) 255-3222. ❖



## Reader Survey

The Department of Consumer Affairs/Bureau of Automotive Repair would appreciate your comments on this publication. Please take a moment to circle your responses and add your comments below.

1. Do you generally find the information presented in the *Smog Check Advisory* useful?

<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Very Useful	Useful	Neutral	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful

2. Do you find the information easy to understand?

<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Very Easy	Easy	Neutral	Somewhat Difficult	Difficult

3. Your Comments

---

---

---

*Please cut out, fold, tape at edge, and mail to the address below.*

Kate McGuire  
Department of Consumer Affairs  
Communications and Education Division  
400 R Street, Suite 3060  
Sacramento, CA 95814



**State of California**  
Gray Davis, Governor

**California Department  
of Consumer Affairs**  
Kathleen Hamilton, Director

**Bureau of Automotive Repair**  
Patrick Dorais, Acting Chief  
400 R St., Sacramento, CA 95814

## **BAR FIELD OFFICE PHONE NUMBERS**

Bakersfield ..... (661) 833-6304  
Riverside ..... (909) 782-4250  
Canoga Park ..... (818) 596-4400  
Sacramento ..... (916) 255-4200  
Culver City ..... (310) 410-0024  
San Jose ..... (408) 277-1860  
Fresno ..... (559) 445-5015  
South El Monte . (626) 575-6934  
Fullerton ..... (714) 680-7851  
Hayward ..... (510) 785-1961  
Oceanside ..... (760) 439-0942

DCA Cashiering (916) 322-7002  
DCA Licensing .. (916) 322-4010  
ET Help Desk ... (916) 255-4476  
MCI ..... (800) 731-SMOG  
(Then press 5 for technical support)

**Consumer Assistance and  
Referee Center: (800) 622-7733**  
**DCA HOTLINE: (800) 952-5210**

Bulk Rate  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Sacramento, CA  
Permit No. 2083

## **Little Scoops...**

- ❖ Registration deadline for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) testing is September 24, 1999. Test dates are November 4, 9, and 11.
- ❖ BAR continues to enhance its Low-Income Repair Assistance Program (LIRAP) as consumer participation levels increase. Any Gross Polluter Certification (GPC) station that is interested in becoming a LIRAP station should call (916) 445-2010.



## **1999 Calendar of Coming Events**

### **September**

**24** Deadline to register  
for Automotive Service  
Excellence (ASE) testing

### **November**

**4, 9, 11** ASE Tests